

God's New Thing

by Paris Reidhead

Paris Reidhead's sermon explores God's promise to create a new people through a new covenant, emphasizing personal relationship and transformation.

Duration: 55:07

Scripture: Exodus 19:1

Topics: "Repentance"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of moral rearmament and its impact on individuals living a materialistic and selfish life. The preacher explains that moral rearmament encourages individuals to list all the aspects of their life that go against the principles of unselfishness, love, truth, and purity. By verbalizing these aspects and making a commitment to live by these four absolutes, individuals can repent and seek a life governed by these principles. The preacher emphasizes the importance of repentance and how it aligns with God's promise to write His law upon our hearts.

Transcript

Turn please to Exodus chapter 19 and prepare to turn to Isaiah chapter 43. I shall read the first six verses of Exodus 19 and several verses from Isaiah 43. In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai.

For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness. And there Israel camped before the mount. And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, And tell the children of Israel, Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bear you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

Now to Isaiah chapter 43, if you will. But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not, for I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine.

When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior.

I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee. Therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.

Fear not, for I am with thee. I will bring thy seed from the east and gather thee from the west. I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Keep not back.

Bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth, even every one that is called by my name, for I have created him for my glory. I have formed him, yea, I have made him. Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears, that all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled.

Who among them can declare this and show us former things? Let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified, or let them hear and say, It is truth. Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant, whom I have chosen, that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he. Before me there was no God-form, neither shall there be after me.

I, even I, am the Lord, and beside me there is no Savior. I have declared and have saved, and I have showed, when there was no strange God among you. Therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God.

Yea, before the day was, I am he, and there is none that can deliver out of my hand. I will work, and who shall prevent it? Thus saith the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships.

I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King. Thus saith the Lord, which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters, which bringeth forth the chariot and horse, the army and the power. They shall lie down together.

They shall not rise. They are extinct. They are quenched as so.

Remember ye not the former things? Neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing. Now it shall spring forth, shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

The beast of the field shall honor me, the dragons and the owls, because I give waters in the wilderness and rivers in the desert to give drink to my people, my chosen. This people have I formed for myself. They shall show forth my praise.

And now I turn to 1 Peter and the 2nd chapter, and tie these three scriptures together. I begin reading with verse 9, just verses 9 and 10 of 1 Peter chapter 2. You'll notice the same words are used in this second chapter that were used in Exodus 19. But he is now writing to someone else.

Perhaps if we go back to the earlier verse and begin there, we will see the picture. Wherefore, laying aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envies and evil speakings, as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby, if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious, to whom coming is unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious. Ye also,

as living stones, are built up a spiritual house and holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in thine a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious, but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made thy head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, and holy nation, a peculiar people, that you should show forth the praises of him which called you out of darkness into his marvelous light, which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God, which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

Now back in your thinking, and if you wish in your Bible to Exodus the nineteenth chapter, there God has gathered this people Israel from Egypt to himself at the foot of Sinai, where they will have a revelation of himself, a revelation of his nature, a revelation of his righteousness and his justice, a revelation of his power and of his grace. For here at Sinai God has chosen to reveal himself to his people. Moses has gone up into the mountain and for forty days has been in the presence of God.

There God has given to him the tables upon which he has inscribed the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments, and he has given to him also the pattern of the tabernacle and the law of the offering. For God has desired a people, a people to whom he could reveal himself, a people to whom he could share all that he plans to do for the nations that are still residing in heathenism and in darkness. God wanted a witness, and so he called Abram and from Abram Isaac and from Isaac Jacob and Jacob's sons and these out of Egypt now in his delivering power, and he has gathered them to himself in order that there he might have this people, formerly slaves in degrading service to Egyptian taskmasters, now to become fellow servants with the living God in his purpose to have a nation that would show forth his praise.

And God's plan? Well, God's plan was to get this witness through natural generation. It would be the sons of Abraham. First it was Isaac, the promised son, and then of the two sons of Isaac he chose Jacob, and then the sons of Jacob, and one became a member of this new thing that God was doing by natural birth, by the will of man, by the will of flesh.

And so it was that he had now a company comprising some two to two and a half million persons. There had been a marvelous revelation of his grace as he had drawn this people out of Egypt, drawn them across the Red Sea, and now had gathered them to the foot of Sinai. You see, God's purpose was that they, in understanding him, should realize his presence in their midst.

So he gave to Moses, as we said, the law of the offerings and the pattern of the tabernacle. This, as you understand, was to be the house of God's dwelling. It was to be a picture of the life of the believer.

It was to be a revelation of God's grace, an unfolding of the means whereby men could come into fellowship with God. Oh, it was to be the center of Israel's life, for there would be in the daytime the pillar of cloud, and at night the pillar of fire, and from any part of the encamped people they could look up and see that God was still in the midst of his people. It was in God's intention that this people should abide by his rules, should obey his will and wish, should respect his plan, and should share in his purpose.

And so he gave them every reason to cooperate with him, every incentive, every blessing, everything that it was possible for God to do to have a people enthusiastically cooperative, God did. And thus here at Sinai he has said that if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar people, a peculiar, a pecuniary, a purchased people, and you shall be a kingdom of priests, a royal priesthood, and you shall be a holy nation. And this was what God intended Israel to be, but actually what happened, as we saw last night within just a few generations, that generation that gathered there at the foot of Sinai died in the wilderness.

Their bones bleached the path along which Israel encamped, for God could not fulfill his purpose until that generation of unbelieving men should have died. And then after he did get a company that would follow him into the land, it was just two generations later that they began to serve Baal and Ashtoreth. And so the history of Israel was one of declension, one of bondage and captivity and recovery, and further declension and bondage and captivity and recovery, until we come to this forty-third chapter of Isaiah, which we will have to call the continental divide of the scripture.

Some years ago as a lad, friends took me up to northern Minnesota, and I recall when a relative broke a stick in two, walked out on a little bridge that the state park service had put over this little stream, this spring or whatever it was, and he dropped the stick as far as he could, one here and one there, and as we watched, one began to slowly float to the north and the other to the south. We were to that place called the continental divide, and all the water north of that particular spot would then finally go up to the Hudson Bay or on further north. The water to the south would end up in the Gulf of Mexico.

We were to the place where the waters would flow in opposite direction. And so Isaiah 43, in a sense, becomes the continental divide of scripture. For here, God tells this people Israel of what he has done.

And then he says, bring forth your witnesses and show me where I have failed you. Bring forth those that will testify against me and say the fault was mine. Blame me if you can, I'll accept the responsibility.

If I have failed you, I am willing to rectify. If I have not done what I should, I'll make it up to you. But if the fault is yours, then understand that I'm going to exact it of you.

And so here in Isaiah chapter 43, he says something like this. Israel, I'm through with you. You are no longer going to be my prime objective and purpose any longer.

I'm going to do something else. And we find this set forth here explicitly in verse 18. As here through the prophet, he turns to this nation and says, Don't boast of your past.

Don't be so proud of your heritage. Don't rest on what Moses and the judges and the prophets said and did. It's far too late for that.

It's far too long a time since then. Remember not the former things and neither consider the things of old. Don't look backward any longer.

And then he said, Behold, I will do a new thing. God is going to do a new thing, an entirely new thing. What will this new thing be? First he says, I will make a way in the wilderness.

I am going to go to that place that is called wilderness, where no water is, where no life is, where only death reigns. And the picture would be of the desert out west of Palestine, that desert in which hardly so much as a cactus could grow. And there would be the thought that would come to the minds of the people

when they heard the word wilderness.

A place of desolation, a place where no life was, only the hardiest of beasts could survive, and man only if he took his provision with him. But he says, I'm going to go into this wilderness and I'm going to make a way. And I'm going to make rivers in the desert.

And the beasts of the field, these are unclean, these that you've been forbidden to eat, these that you look down upon, these that you call heathen, these that are vile in your eyes and condemned by you. These I have, beasts of the field will honor me. If I can't get honor out of Jacob's sons and out of Isaac's family and Abram's kin, then I'll find someone that will honor me.

I'll make a way in the wilderness, and I'll put a river in the desert, and the beasts of the field will come, and the dragons, or those little things that would climb up the wall of our house in Africa, these little lizards and the owls, which Israel was forbidden to eat, all of them unclean, the kind of thing that was in the sheep that was let down from heaven, that Peter saw. He said, I'm going to take this that you consider of no value, this that you consider beyond your use, that you've been told is valueless, and because I give to these waters in the wilderness and rivers in the desert to give drink to my people, my chosen, these, the beasts of the field, these, the lizards, these, the owls, they will drink of this water. They will be changed by the drinking, and I will have from them a people formed for myself.

I will have a people that will show forth my praise. And here you have that prophetic setting forth of a new thing that the Lord is going to do. Now, what was the reason for the failure of Israel? I'll tell you why.

Because they got into the place the wrong way. They came by the will of flesh. They came by the will of man.

They came by way of blood. They were born of natural generation into Israel, and they saw the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire, and they were carried down to the court of the tabernacle, and inside they could see the badger skin covering the house of God's dwelling. They were told about the Ten Commandments that resided in the Ark of the Covenant, and it was right in the midst of the village where they lived, or nearby.

But do you know something? The reason that Israel as a nation failed was that God was too far from the people. He was too far removed from them. There was too great a distance between them, and the consequence of this was that when they turned their back on the tabernacle and the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire and went about their business, they forgot about the Ten Commandments.

They forgot about God's presence. They forgot about God's glory. They forgot about God's purpose, and they became consumed with their own interests.

And as we saw last night, they began to serve Baal and Ashtoreth. They began to seek for things and experience and position, and the consequence of this was they utterly failed God. And so God said, this isn't going to do.

It won't work. I'm too far away from the people, and so I'm going to do a new thing. This time, however, I'm not going to do it the way I did with Abraham.

This time it's not going to be by the will of flesh. It's not going to be by the will of man. It's not going to be by blood.

But I'm going to put a river. I'm going to put a spring. I'm going to put a well of water, and the only ones that can be part of my new thing are the ones who come in their death and drink of that living water and live because they drink.

There'll be no other way to get in, for they'll have no heritage to boast of. They will not be able to say, look at our past. They will not be able to say, look, we are the people.

They'll have nothing to which to boast. They're going to have to come, each one for himself and each generation for itself, and drink personally of that living water, for if they do not, they will have absolutely no part with me, and they will be but beasts of the field, dragons and owls. And so God has now begun to picture to us something of what he's going to do, and he has shown us the failure of what he did.

The failure was this, that being in a tabernacle, a tent of dwelling, in the midst of the land, was to be too far away from the people. It had to be closer than this. So what else did he have to say? We see something here from Isaiah, chapter 43, but if you'll turn now to Jeremiah 31, you'll find that God gives a further revelation concerning this new thing that he's going to do.

Behold, the days come, and I read from verse 31, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Judah and with the house of Israel, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which my covenant they break, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts and will be their God and they shall be my people.

And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord. For they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more.

Do you notice? He said, I'm going to make a new covenant. We'll find out a little later, but bear it in mind now. This new covenant begins with forgiveness of the past.

It begins with the washing away of the guilt of other days. It begins by removing all of the transgressions and the guilt that those transgressions have acquired. It begins by taking one out from the sentence of death.

But it doesn't stop there. He said, I'm going to make up for one of the deficiencies of the past. There I inscribe the law on a table of stones and put it in the Ark of the Covenant.

But when I do this new thing and when I make this new covenant, I'm going to take great care that the law is far closer to the people that are expecting to keep it than simply on a table of stones. And so he said, in that new day, I'm going to write my law in their heart. I'm going to inscribe it right there within them.

So that every place they go, they'll carry the law with them. And they will not need to look down at a memory card. And they won't need to look up at something that's inscribed on the wall.

Because in this new thing I'm going to do, I am going to put the law right in the very center of their being. And I'm going to inscribe it so indelibly, enlighten it so clearly that wherever they go, the law will go with them. And there'll be no question with this new thing.

For the law is going to be right upon their hearts. And so this implies two things. That those that have been forgiven have had a changed attitude toward the will of God.

I believe that we see in this a picture of biblical repentance. I believe we see a people that have in the past been guilty of breaking the law. And now they've come to the place where they have abhorred themselves for their crimes and completely changed their minds about them.

They have decided that instead of going on in their anarchy, in their treason, in their rebellion, that they have now come to the place that the purpose of their hearts is to please God. And that therefore they are intending that in everything they shall do henceforth and hereafter, the purpose of their life will be to please God. This law is not going to be an involved list of 613 deep things to be done as it was in the Old Testament.

Some 285 negative things that Israel was not to do and the rest that they were to do. In this new thing it's going to be simplified. It's going to be far more extensive because it is simplified.

It's going to be far more extensive. It's going to reach in a much wider arc. It's going to go higher and deeper because the heart of the matter is going to be in the individual and it's no longer going to be a matter of details, but it's going to be a matter of principle.

For I am going to write a new law upon their hearts, said he. What is this new law? I believe it's the very thing we were talking about this morning. That that person that has come to see the enormity of his sin has seen it thus, that in its essence, sin is living to please oneself.

That a sinner is a person that has committed his will to the policy and practice of pleasing himself at the expense of God and of others and he lives to this end. This is the reason for his being. Self-gratification, self-satisfaction, and anyone is a sinner regardless of what his profession may be, regardless of what scripture he knows or the ceremonies he's experienced, as long as the intent of his heart is to please himself at the expense of God and others.

And a person repents when he comes to the place that he discovers that the will of God is the government of his life and the glory of God is the reason for his life. He only has repented who has changed his mind about his reason for being. It is this, that the sinner is headed in this direction.

I am going to do what pleases me. If it pleases me to lie, I'll lie. Steal, I'll steal.

Swear, I'll swear. The reason for my being is my pleasure and I am God to decide how to be pleased. In other words, he is committed.

He's headed in the direction of self-pleasing. But then there comes a time when he sees the nature of this. He abhors himself and he completely repudiates this principle of life.

And so it's an utter right about face from pleasing self to pleasing God, from governing oneself to accepting the government of Jesus Christ. And so it is that there is a new law that is written upon his heart. It isn't ten items nor six hundred and thirteen items, but it is a new central principle, a new motivational springboard in the life.

Here it had been to please self and here it is to please God. And so there will be a touchstone, a magnet by which everything can be tested. It will be this.

Is this to please God? Will this glorify God? Is this for his honor? Is this for his praise? And so there will be a lodestone, if you please, by which one can test all of the actions and all of the thoughts and opportunities, all the words and deeds which shall come. For this new people are to be a people of the passion, a people whose passion is to glorify Jesus Christ. And so it is that he says, I'll write my law on their hearts.

Not that he's going to have a great scroll that'll need to be turned or an IBM picture machine that'll need to be spun where a person says, well now, what was I supposed to do when this happened? Oh no, it's not this kind of a memorizing of the minutiae of life, but it is something far, far more effective than that. It is that there has come a new governing principle into the life which is, the whole reason for my being is to glorify God in Jesus Christ. And when one sees this and understands this, then they realize why the Lord Jesus said when he asked, which is the first and greatest commandment, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind and soul and strength.

The essence of love is to seek the best interest of, and the greatest good of, and the chief happiness of another. In this case, to love God is not to carry a slushy sentimental feeling about him, a kind of a, a paperizing of the emotions. For when you speak of love in the scriptural context, it has no relationship whatever to that that's being merchandised 24 hours a day on the radio.

No, no, it's not this. It's not some slushy sentimentality, I say it all. Love for God is not in the realm of the emotions, but it's in the realm of the volition.

It is the committal of the will to the pleasing of another. And he loves God whose whole being is committed to this purpose, to please, to glorify, to satisfy God. And this, thus, the law is written upon the heart.

Ten items were written upon tables of stone. Six hundred and three other items were prescribed in the writings. And all of this Israel broke.

And so he said, now I'm going to put a new law in your heart. It's going to be this. Thou shalt seek to please, seek to gratify, seek to satisfy, seek to glorify, seek to glorify God with all your heart and your mind and your soul and your strength.

In other words, the focus of your entire personality and your whole being on this end. Then he said, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Here again, it's not sentiment, it's not emotion.

Here again, it is to seek the best interests of one's neighbor. It is to seek to provide, to bring, to do, to have, to say that which will be to the eternal best interests. Now as a father, it's my responsibility to seek the best interests of my children.

And this means that there are times when it's necessary for me to do that which incurs their momentary displeasure. For instance, when a little child will look into the daddy's face as Sarah did one day when she was some old enough to know better at least and I said, Sarah, stop pulling the leaves off mother's plant. And she smiled at me and pulled another leaf.

I said, Sarah dear, stop doing that. She smiled and pulled another leaf. I said, Sarah, stop that or daddy'll thank you.

She looked at me and put her little foot down on the floor and said, I won't. Well she did. I got to the seat of the problem immediately and began to broaden her understanding and applied where it was appropriate

and so the consequence was she did.

But you see, it was necessary for me at that time to incur her momentary displeasure in order to secure her lasting best interests. And so it always is with a parent that their concern is not the pleasure at the moment but the good for the future. And thus the Bible is said about pastors, reprove, rebuke, and exhort.

Mind you, it's extremely costly because most church members would far rather be damned by faint praise than to be saved by helpful criticism. And the consequence of it is that this is an extremely costly part of your ministry. But nevertheless, for your neighbors, for your friends, for your family, for everyone you meet, to love your neighbor as yourself is to seek the best interest, the eternal best interest, greatest good, and highest happiness of all men, including yourself and God.

Now this is the law written upon the heart. It's a simple thing, isn't it? It isn't a great code of details that you'll have difficulty remembering. It's a matter of principle that from now on your life is to be committed in the direction of seeking the glory of God and the good of others.

Well, we can see that, I think, that this is essentially what's involved in repentance. I would have called to your attention something that I'm not commending. I'm simply using it as a contrast to show you that the churches we know it, the evangelical churches we know it, have not learned this principle.

I want to say it again. The churches we know it in America, the Protestant church in America, have not learned this basic principle of repentance. There is a group in America that is called moral rearmament.

I'm not proposing it, I'm not advocating it, but I must use it as an illustration of the dynamic of this principle when it's released with nothing more energizing than human personality. Years ago, a man by the name of Frank Buckman, a Presbyterian preacher, established something that he called the Oxford Movement after John Wesley's class meeting. It had a short history for some years and then it was dissipated by its own inner weakness and it, but it had great good in the lives of many and touched many lives.

I meet people all over the country that got started in the direction of reality because of something there. But again, I'm not either commending or condemning that. It's just a matter of history that Frank Buckman started moral rearmament and then it stopped.

But then it started the Oxford Movement. Then in Europe and in Switzerland particularly, he became aware of the necessity for the release of moral energy in our chaotic world and so he formulated a group called moral rearmament. It had some of the principles of the old Oxford group movement, particularly the four absolutes.

But it did not, wasn't Christian. It had no recognition of Christ but it was simply the means whereby there could be the release of moral energy in the world. In moral rearmament the four absolutes are these, absolute love, absolute unselfishness, absolute truth and absolute purity.

This has its appeal particularly to the up and out, to the wealthy, to those that have some influence. We find that there is out in Mackinac Island an annual gathering for this group and there are papers and publications that they are disseminating especially in the east. But the essence of it is this.

If a person that's been living a typical materialistic selfish sensual life feels that there is something more and they're approached by moral rearmament the approach is this. They ask the individual to list all the things in his life which are contrary to these four absolutes. All selfishness, all hatred, all untruth, all

impurity.

List them all and then in the presence of somebody else verbalize them, say them, put them, say them out loud and then having done that to make a verbal committal in the presence of others to live the life from that time on governed by this four, these four absolutes, these four principles. And so what they are is a, what it is is a public committal of the hope of the individual to live a life of absolute love, absolute unselfishness, absolute truth and absolute purity. Now it hasn't gotten very far in America because it's difficult to get people to be willing to make that kind of a committal.

But there's been a startling success in Europe. For instance, about twelve or fourteen years ago, Buckman and his followers went into the Ruhr Valley of Germany, in West Germany. At that time, about seventy to eighty percent of the laborers, the union members, were card-carrying communists.

And so we had a very difficult field. The Ruhr was in a chaotic condition and the communists were doing their best to keep it that way, to keep Western Germany from experiencing a reconstruction and a return to industrial strength. So, the, all they did, the moral rearmament representatives was to go among these men, present this to them and say, look, it's to your advantage.

And so they got the union leaders, the union followers, and the industrialists, the employers, the owners of factories, and together they made a commitment to absolute truth, purity, love, and unselfishness. Two, three, four years ago, Konrad Adenauer, Chancellor of West Germany, wrote to Frank Buckman and he said, during the years that you first went into the Ruhr, we have seen a surprising change. For instance, there's been a minimum of work stoppages due to strikes.

There's been a maximum of cooperation and a minimum of friction. And furthermore, the communist interests have decreased tremendously. In fact, today we're happy to report that it's less than eight percent, somewhere just over seven percent, as against the seventy to eighty percent when you began, that are now interested in the communist cause.

Some months ago in New York City, a film was shown. It was a documentary film. It was called The Crowning Experience.

It was made by the followers of moral rearmament in West Germany and in France. You will find, I'm sure, Bethany, something that echoes in your heart when I tell you that people sold their insurance policies, sold their homes, and sold their cars, and took their life savings in order that they might produce a picture that could be shown in America which somehow would get to the root of the selfishness, the materialism, and the sensualism of this land in every country of the world, in Japan, where they had those riots that kept President Eisenhower from going a few years ago. Moral rearmament came.

And so it was in South America, in Brazil, in Uruguay, in Venezuela. The same thing was true. Are you there? You say, are you commending moral rearmament? And the answer is no, no, I'm not.

You know why? Because I believe that these four absolutes are nothing more than repentance, codifying. That's all. But when I tell you that moral rearmament has released into our society energy and power to change conditions, it is the greatest indictment of the Church that it's possible to make.

Because the Church has this. Press the Bible and press Christ. And it's still failed to release energy into society.

What does it mean? It means that our Church members have never repented. They've picked up a box full of doctrines. They've picked up a bag full of theological ideas.

But they have never, for the most part, committed themselves to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in repentance. That's what it means. They're making Him an end, a means instead of an end.

They're trying to use Him to protect them in their selfishness rather than to save them from it. And I tell you today that America is ripe for judgment. I love this land.

But as I kneel before God, I cannot bring it into my heart to say, Oh God, protect America from her enemies. Because if I have any insight into right and wrong, America is absolutely ripe for judgment. No nation in history has had the benefit and the privilege and the truth and the light that ours has had.

And no nation in history has so systematically and commercially gone about to corrupt the rest of the world. If any of you have ever traveled, you know how disgraced you are when you go into a bookstore and find filth and pornography the rest of the world has refused, being purveyed in gaudy covers as against the dignified, intelligent literature of the Communists. And the filth that stinks to hide in it are national export corruption.

And the world says if that's what decadent America is, we're not going to go to the West. We'll go to the East. Oh, dear heart, today, if the members that name the name of Jesus Christ, that have professed faith in Him and know the plan of salvation had ever come to the place that they had been delivered from their past sins and had a new law written upon their hearts, the law to seek the glory of God and the good of others, just this, to which they had bought the commitment of their human personality and energy, we would not stand back in amazement at the accomplishments of moral rearmament.

The Church of Jesus Christ would have by sheer weight of just natural force have had far more influence than it's had. And it has to begin here. I believe we have a need for a clarion call to our people to repent from selfishness and to repent from all of that which is represented by these four absolutes and commit ourselves to love and unselfishness and truth and purity.

For this is the description and the codification of repentance. And this is what he said and this is what he was going to do. He was going to write his law upon their hearts.

Has this happened to you? Have you come to the place where the whole purpose of your being is to glorify God? You say, well, that sanctification is a no-no. No, that's just repentance. That's just repentance.

To please God is just repentance because the opposite to pleasing God is nothing but sin. Sin and a commitment to sin. And to repent is to change from pleasing yourself to pleasing God in purpose.

Now you need the sanctifying grace of God and power of the Holy Spirit and cleansing of the blood to implement that purpose. But I'm talking about the purpose now. Has the law been written on your heart? Have you come to that place? Have you come to that level of repentance where you've repented? Where you've actually come to the place where you've committed all of the fiber and resource of your being to the end of the glory of God and the good of others? That's repentance.

That's the law written upon the heart. Now will you turn to Ezekiel 36 so that we'll see what God had? Lest we should, before any moment, think that this is the whole of it. Let us see here in the 25th verse of Ezekiel 36 the implications.

As we cry out for our land and as we pray and we must pray, let us pray, O God, make America blessable. Make America blessable. Do you know how it's going to become blessable? Through you.

This is a personal matter, an individual matter. This is what God said in Israel. He said, I look for a man who would stand in the gap and fill up the hedge.

And the whole responsibility is yours. It isn't they in Washington or they in New York or they somewhere else. This is me.

It's got to be a personal matter. And so we see it's personal here. Verse 25, Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you.

A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and will give you a heart of flesh. And now notice in verse 27, And I will put my spirit within you and cause cause cause cause cause you to walk in my statutes. I will cause you to do it.

I didn't say I will command you. He says I will cause you. I will cause you.

And ye shall keep my judgments and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers. And ye shall be my people.

And I will be your God. And I will save you from your uncleannesses. And I will call for the corn that will increase it and lay no famine upon you.

Do you see what he has said? I'm going to do a new thing. I'm going to go to the heathens. I'm going to go to these that have had no part in the promises.

These that you call dragons and owls. These that are the beasts of the field. And I'm going to bring a river of living water.

Who will drink of that and the first thing that's going to happen is they're going to have a new heart. And the law is going to be written upon their heart. And I'm going to take away the heart of stone of rebellion.

I'm going to give them a heart of flesh, pliable, moldable, directable. And I'm going to cause, I'm going to bring you to a place where the purpose of your heart and life is absolutely contrary to what it was before. Previously you lived for self-interest and self-gain and self-honor and self-pleasing.

But now because of what I've done, because you've drunk of that water, you've drunk of that well, that river of living water has come to you, you're going to be inwardly an entirely new person. New aims, new goals, new objectives, new directives, new power, new government, new rule. Do you see? And then he said, in addition to making you want to do what's right, and then leaving you utterly frustrated because you can't.

Oh, I'm going to do something wonderful. I'm going to write my law on your heart, repentance. I'm going to take away the heart of stone, your identification with Christ, the sanctifying power of his grace.

You're not going to have to carry that weight any longer because I'm going to make it possible for you to have deliverance. I'm going to bring you to that place where you will be free from that weight any longer. It's not going to tyrannize you and terrorize you and control you.

And in addition to that, I'm going to put my spirit within you and cause... There's the Christian life, my dear. There it is. I'll sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be cleaned from all your filthiness, from all your idols.

I'll cleanse you. Isn't that marvelous? The past under the blood. The past cleansed.

The guilt of the past removed. Justified. Forgiven.

Pardoned. We don't have to carry that weight any longer. Don't have to drag that thing with us any further because He's going to sprinkle clean water upon us.

He's going to cleanse us from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit. Do I speak to someone tonight that came into this house eaten up by the cancer of memory of your sins, the guilt of the past, the crimes you've committed against God and yourself and others. And it's like a weight, you know, in China years ago when a man killed another.

The sentence was that the murderer had to have the corpse of the man he'd killed tied on his back until the murderer went down in death with the one he'd killed. And, you know, many a person has carried the corpse of his sins on his back and on his heart. He thought sin would be so pleasant.

It seemed to be such a delightful thing and smart thing and clever thing at the time. And now when he wakes up in the morning it's there and when he goes to bed at night it's there. Oh, what will I do? You remember that Shakespeare said of one that they looked into their hands and saw blood spots that no soap could remove, no apothecary's ointment could take away.

And in desperation the cry was out, out, out. There was no way to take it out. And so there's many a person that has the past just weighing upon them.

Do I speak to someone like that tonight? Oh, there's a fountain of cleansing, there's a fountain of living water, there's a fountain of grace. Can't you see God's new thing began with the cleansing of the conscience and the cleansing of the mind and the cleansing of the spirit and the washing away in the flood of the crimson tide of Calvary all the guilt of the past. Can't you see and that's for you.

Do I speak to someone that's come in with a load of guilt that I have good news for you? The Lord Jesus Christ went to the cross of Calvary and there he was smitten and out of his side flowed water and blood and it became a fountain of cleansing. He died for you. He died in your place and in your stead.

He said, I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean. But not only that, he's not only going to cleanse you from the guilt of the past, but he asks you to come as the condition for that cleansing, completely purposing from this moment on to please him, to glorify him. He didn't say you had to do that before you could be cleansed.

He said you had to purpose to do it. You had to want to do it. You had to intend to do it.

It had to be the goal and aim of your life and God knows whether this is real or not. This is what repentance is. It's why he says repent and believe.

Change your mind about who's boss. Jesus Christ is going to be boss from now on. Change your mind about for whom you're living.

Not yourself, but for him, for his glory and the good of others. But I speak to you tonight, dear heart, under a weight of guilt. You come.

I speak to you, church member, that have lived for years under the cover of theology, but you've never had your heart exposed. But tonight or in days past, you've discovered that you have an impenitent heart. Won't you come tonight to him? I speak to you, dear Christian.

You say, oh yes, my purpose is to please him. My purpose is to glorify him. The law has been written upon my heart, but oh, I carry the body of this death.

My traits, my tendencies, my natural disposition, and my appetites, these things haunt me. Oh, is there not victory? Yes, there is victory. There is victory.

For he says, I will take away the stony heart. He took it with him to the cross. That's why he's taken it away.

He went there as you. He went in your place and in your stead. And if you will realize that he died for you and he died as you, that he could deliver you from the domination and the control and the bondage to your tendencies and your traits and your disposition and your nature, and if you will deal with trait and tendency and disposition and nature as the evil thing it is, and come confessing that you need deliverance not only from what you've done but from what you are, then he will take away that heart of stone.

He will take, he took you with him to the cross. And if you will see yourself crucified with him, then God will release the moral victory of Calvary into your life and deliver you from the tyranny of yourself. That isn't all.

There's one thing, as we've said, not to do what you shouldn't. But oh, how can I be caused to walk in his statue? Isn't there some way that this purpose of my heart can be implemented? Isn't there some way that power can be released in my life? I know that I ought to give light. I know I ought to illuminate the darkness.

But where is that power? I know I ought to witness. I know I ought to speak. But where is that release, that freedom, that power? And he said, I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statues.

So tonight the invitation to you is to come to him and allow him to deliver and to deal with whatever need you have. To put his spirit within you, quick in empowering, covering, baptizing, immersing, submerging, equipping, undoing, anointing, until it's no longer you but it's Christ living in you. This is his new thing.

Don't you see? A river of living water that would take away filthiness and put a new law in our hearts, take away a heart of stone and put his spirit within us. And he wants you to come. And he wants you to want all that he's provided, all that he's intended.

And I said you'd hear about the new covenant again in 1 Corinthians chapter 11. Paul is writing of what he'd received, and he's telling there as it relates to the Lord's Supper something of what took place. And he said in verse 25, after the same manner also he took the cup when he had stopped saying, This cup is the new covenant in mine.

And everything that he purposed to do in that new covenant he sealed and he accomplished and he delivered by his blood. And the blood of Jesus Christ testifies that his new covenant is now in operation. Cleansing, a new heart, the law, his law written in upon the heart, the heart of stone removed, and his

spirit put within it.

And everything he purposed to do in his new thing, in his new covenant, he's accomplished and sealed by his shed blood. And the blood of Jesus Christ tonight is the testimony of the full provision of the new covenant. For this is the new covenant in my blood.

And if you trusted the blood of Christ for deliverance from past sins, you can trust the blood of Christ for deliverance from the tyranny of self, and for his sanctifying, heart-cleansing, purifying grace, you can trust the blood of Christ for the empowering, baptizing presence of the Holy Spirit. For it's all accomplished by his blood. This is the blood of the new covenant.

And it's all in the new covenant. Now why should it be? What is the reason? Do you remember what we read in Peter and we see it again? For there in that second chapter of Peter he said, You are a chosen generation. You are a royal priesthood.

You are a holy nation. You are a purchased people that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. And this is why you need the new covenant.

This is why you need cleansing from past sins. This is why you need deliverance from the tyranny of the flesh and your nature. This is why you need the fullness of his spirit in order that you can show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Have you added into the full heritage of the new covenant? You can. You can. For this is his purpose for you.

He will have a people which will show forth his praises. But what if you don't? What if you refuse? The word that he said then is the same today. If God can't succeed in getting you to be what he intends and wants you to be, all he'll do is bypass you and turn to others.

But he said, I will. I will. I will.

I will do a new thing. Now you choose whether you're part of it or not. But he will do it.

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